

~~SECRET~~

EXCERPT
85- 3120

file
9 AUG 1985

File: Post-Mortems & Studies--
Intelligence Assessments

8 August 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Ambassador William Leonhart, Senior Review Panel

FROM: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Postmortems

1. In looking at some of the postmortems to see how intelligence alerted policymakers to unfolding events, I read with interest your observations on Iran and the fall of the Shah as well as Nicaragua centering around the Sandinistas taking over Somoza. Each subject was treated from an intelligence standpoint alone. In the case of the Shah, we did note in some publications the unraveling nature of events happening in Iran. The assessment was that the Shah could hang in there, this undoubtedly prompted by the history of 1953 events. In Nicaragua, we assessed Somoza as having a 50/50 chance of hanging in there and one could judge that our intelligence missed the boat.

2. What is missing in the postmortems, however, is the role that US policy shifts played in altering the course of events dramatically far beyond any prognosis for intelligence to predict.

3. In Iran, the judgment was when things really got tough, the Shah would call out the military much as he did in 1953 and squash Khomeini and the dissident movement. In Iran, the analysts could not predict that the US Government would end up sending General Huyser on a mission to quell the military from any involvement. In Nicaragua, no one predicted that the US policy would shift from supporting Somoza to the point where we cut off all aid and assistance and took effort diplomatically to undermine the Somoza rule.

4. I guess my bottom line is that I feel that postmortems must take into account the shifts of policy which cannot be predicted by the intelligence analyst and somehow point out that the failures were really not intelligence but the results of the policy winds blowing in different directions.

5. I would like your comments on how we might tackle this intrusive factor in future postmortems.

John N. McMahon

25X1

02
00

25X1